

# The Catalyst



The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks

Winter-Spring 1997

Volume 2 No. 2

## Field Notes

The **California State Railroad Museum** is planning the 1997 National Railway Preservation Symposium on March 21-23, 1997. They have invited several distinguished speakers from academia, preservation agencies, museums, and interpretive planning and design organizations.

Special tours have been arranged to Railtown 1897 in Jamestown, and the Southern Pacific Railroad Sacramento Shops for an on-site discussion of interpretation opportunities and practices at historic railroad sites. Registration fee: \$125.00. For registration information, please call (916) 322-8485.

Steve Feazel of **Northern Buttes District** has made excellent contacts with minority community leaders in the Oroville area and expressed a desire that all people in the community be involved with State Parks. Their reply went something like, "We have been waiting for someone to ask this question." "Now let us tell you what we are thinking and feeling." They expressed a great desire to be involved with the park but really did not know how to access the park and its programs. They were excited about the prospect of a camping program that would introduce non-traditional users to an outdoor experience.

**Los Lagos District** recently completed a year-long project of cataloging their interpretive collections using ARGUS and the help of San Bernardino State University intern Krista Anderson.

Tin Cans, Anyone? Sherrin Grout at **Calaveras District** has early 1850s tin can molds. If you will need replica tin cans in the next 3 to 5 years call Sherrin at (209)532-0150.

**Point Mugu State Park** will be having a celebration in honor of the annual migration and successful return from the brink of extinction of the gray whale on Sunday March 9, 1997 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Whale appreciation and marine awareness will be the themes for the 1997 Whale Festival - "A Whale of a Good Time." Live entertainment, marine conservation information booths, whale watching stations, activities, displays, demonstrations, music and food will all be a part of the day's events. Many different marine agencies will have booths to help interpret their role in marine conservation. Marine-related arts and crafts booths will offer items for purchase. For more information call Cara E. O'Brien, Park Interpretive Specialist at (805) 986-8591.

High School students are learning about the "Ecology of the Backcountry of San Diego" this semester in a course put on by the **Colorado Desert District** staff. Last semester it was well received at a junior high school. Students learn about archaeology, paleontology and all facets of ecology.

Interpreters across the state are getting ready for the NAI Region 9 workshop April 4-6 at Monte Toyon Camp; perhaps you should go too! For information call (415)332-3871.





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## Contributors Guidelines

Catalyst welcomes your original articles of any length! Or, send copies of stories published elsewhere that you think our readers will appreciate. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time.

We really appreciate articles submitted on disk or by E Mail. We can read most formats of DOS/Windows disks. Printed manuscripts, facsimile or phone messages are also accepted. Please advise if you would like your diskette returned, otherwise we will recycle it in our office to save postage.

Illustrations are strongly encouraged. Drawings, graphs or other illustrations may be submitted on disk or hard copy. Black & white glossy photos are preferred; color prints or slides sometimes work. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly.

## About Your Subscription

Due to staff turnover at the Park Services office, our database of subscribers was damaged recently. We lost the names and addresses of many folks who would like to receive *Catalyst*, particularly those that are not DPR employees. Extra copies are being sent to each unit and cooperating association. Please let us get a copy to everyone who wants one.

*Catalyst* subscriptions are **free** and available to anyone involved in interpretation in California State Parks including seasonal and permanent employees and volunteers. For additional subscriptions or address changes, please call Darlene Mitchener at (916)654-2249.

We apologize to those subscribers that we lost. Thanks to everyone for helping us get the mailing list back together.

## The Catalyst Committee

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# From the Editor

Allow me to introduce myself as your editor. When I'm not working on *Catalyst* I am the District Interpretive Specialist for the Colorado Desert District. I've also worked as a State Park Ranger for 10 years and taught interpretation at Humboldt State University for a couple of years. I've done seasonal interpretive jobs of every possible sort.



This is the second issue of *Catalyst* since I took over as editor. Perhaps you've noticed a few changes, maybe not. This is what I hope to provide.

- **Broader reach for articles** *Catalyst* will continue to bring you the best work from within State Parks *along with the best from throughout the field of interpretation.*

- **A big, meaty newsletter**, packed full of quality information; 28% less fluff than any other DPR publication.

- **Greater consideration of intellectual property rights** We will have explicit permission to use everything we publish. Period.

- **Recognition by the Library of Congress with an ISSN** *Catalyst* now carries International Standard Serial Number 1089-9286.

- **Friendly, more readable design** At least that's our goal. I'll let you be the judge. Let me know what you think.

We appreciate your comments both on editorial content and design.

Brian Cahill, Editor

## Contributors

**M-O-T-E-R-ized Interpretation** on page 6 was written by Wes Chapin. Wes is District Interpretive Specialist for Channel Coast District and a popular instructor at Asilomar. He can be reached at (805) 899-1406.

**Making a Case for Crafts** on page 8 was written by Mary Stokes. Mary is the District Interpretive Specialist at Four Rivers District. She can be reached at (209) 826-1196.

**Coffee with the Ranger** on page 9 was written by Kim Baker. Kim is a Ranger I at Silverwood Lake SRA. She has also appeared in *Catalyst* under the byline Team Silverwood and Kim Seileck. She can be reached at (619) 389-2303.

**Now Where Did I Leave That Theme?** on page 10 was written by Carolyn Fatooh of the Pine Ridge Association. This is the second in a series of three articles about the workshop Sam Ham presented last year. It also appeared in the *Pine Cone*, the newsletter of the Pine Ridge Association.

The **book review of *They Came Singing*** on page 11 was written by John D. Mott. John is the Cooperating Association Program Manager at Park Services in Sacramento and a frequent contributor to *Catalyst*. He can be reached at (916) 654-5397.

**They Don't Work for Nothing** on page 12 was written by Paula Zitzler. Paula has worked with volunteers of all ages. The article also appeared in the Region 2 newsletter of the National Association for Interpretation, *Mason-Dixon By-Line*. You can reach her at (814) 696-9380 or at her E-mail address, paulazl072@aol.com.

**Recycling Computers and Disks** on page 13 was written by David Inouye. He is a faculty member in the Dept. of Zoology at the University of Maryland. The article first appeared on the Internet. David can be reached at di5@umail.umd.edu.

**Embezzlement in the Redwoods** on page 14 was written by Chuck Grennell. Chuck is a Ranger I at Calaveras Big Trees SP. Any questions regarding this information or requests for more detailed information may be sent to him at: Calaveras Big Trees SP, P.O. Box 120, Arnold, CA 95223, (209) 795-2334.

**Beware of Student Stipends** on page 16 was written by Pat Cole. Pat is Executive Director of the Yellowstone Association. This article originally appeared in a slightly different form on *In Touch*, the NPS computer bulletin board for interpreters. She can be reached at P.O. Box 117, Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190. Be sure to get competent advice on tax law and other legal issues; this has not been reviewed for applicability to DPR associations.

**Customer Service: the Key to Conservation** on page 18 was written by Cregg Hardwick. He has a background in management and educational software development. Cregg does his story telling in Shreveport, Louisiana. The article also appeared in the National Association for Interpretation Region VI newsletter, *Visions*. He can be reached at 75467.3065@compuserve.com.

Other material, published without a byline, is compiled by *Catalyst* staff from a variety of sources. For more information on any of these items please contact the editor.

# What's Up?



## Interpreters' Resources

### Interpreting Rivers

An excellent *River of Words* teacher's guide is available from the International Rivers Network (IRN) to encourage continuing watershed explorations. Write to IRN, 1847 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94703 or phone (510) 848-1155. Suggested donation \$5 per copy.

### Volunteer Marketplace Catalog

The catalog offers over 150 books on volunteer management, fundraising and non-profit management. Also available are promotional items for national Volunteer Week (April 13-19, 1997). To order your free catalog call (800)272-8306.

### Wormanial

Would you like to get more information on how to use earthworms in a composting project? Then you need a Wormanial Kit! It includes a 26 minute video and a 48 page teaching guide for ages 8 and up. It is available for \$38.40 from Flowerfield Enterprises, 10332 Shaver Rd. Dept 114, Kalamazoo MI 49002 or (616)327-0108.

### Backyard Birds & Butterflies

Two new comic books teach the importance of birds & butterflies for grades 4 through 6. They show how to observe & identify basic life cycles and habitats. For ordering information call Maxine Mathis at (800)825-5547 ext 32.

### Invertebrates in Captivity

Annual Conference July 31-August 3 in Tucson, AZ. For information call (513)281-4701 ext 8348.

### Oral History Workshop

On March 14-16, 1997, Charles Morrissey is offering an oral history workshop to be held at Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, California.

This three-day intensive workshop is designed for experienced oral history practitioners. The central focus is practical mastery of interviewing techniques for obtaining spoken recollections of historical credibility and usefulness.

The workshop fee is \$250.00. For additional information, please call Gail Kurtz at (510)525-7050 or Elizabeth Wright at (415)928-3417.

### Non-Profit Times

The Non-Profit Times is an excellent source of information for non-profit managers. Subscriptions are free (believe it or not) to all full-time executives of non-profits. Anyone who is not receiving this is missing a wonderful resource. The information about the stipend case and the university (on page 18) was in the November issue. To get your subscription, write Non-Profit Times, 240 Cedar Knolls Road, Suite 318, Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927 or phone 201-734-1700; fax 210-734-1777.

### Storytelling Workshop

Susan Strauss is offering a storytelling workshop designed for environmental educators and interpreters at Yosemite National Park from April 7-11, 1997. The tuition charge is \$375.00 For more information call Susan Strauss at 541-382-2888.

### Computerized Program Reservations

Do you take reservations for school programs or tours? Perhaps you could use a computer program called ResSched. This program requires Windows 95. It is designed for a network setup so that more than one user can input information (It can also be operated from a single work station). It will schedule times and type of program and can be used for a number of resources. It will track client names and has several search functions that will help you to track a group, facility or program type. If you keep the program the cost is \$180. There is also a 16-bit version of this program for windows 3.1 but it is not on the same level as the Windows version.

People who are still operating in DOS should check out Reservation Assistant. It does reservations for up to 100 resources with 10 features each. It is straitforward and easy to use. Though it does not do all that the above program does it still provides what most parks would need. It also offers charts to show when facilities have been booked. If you keep the program the cost is \$49.

ZD Net Software offers a variety of programs. These programs are share ware which means that a FREE copy of the program is available for you to try. If you decide to keep it there is a fee but it is very reasonable.

Where to get them? I downloaded them from the internet, contact: <http://search2.ZDnet.com>



# Dear Master Interpreter

**Dear Master Interpreter,**

I took a look in the closet to see if I could find a spare bulb for the slide projector. I found quite a few, but the boxes don't tell which model

of projector they are for, just some kind of code. Does it really matter which one I stick in the projector?

Burned Out

**Dear Burned,**

Yes, it matters! You can break the ceramic lamp socket trying to insert the wrong lamp. It pays to know the code! That is, the ANSI lamp code, a three letter code (like EXW) that identifies the lamp.

You have three or four different lamp choices depending on how bright it needs to be. While a bright image on the screen looks best, those bright lamps will fade your slides faster. Also, brighter lamps don't last as long (15 hours instead of 200 hours!). So in the visitor center where it is real dark and I can't afford to have them burn out as often, I use a lower brightness lamp. But out at the campfire center, where we sometimes show slides before it is completely dark and it is a long way from the projector to the screen, I use a brighter lamp.

So, if you are using any of the Ektagraphic III projectors here are the codes. Listed from maximum down to lowest brightness EXW, EXR, FHS, or EXY. For other projector models, ask your DIS.



MI

**Dear Master Interpreter,**

On one of my Junior Ranger programs a kid refused to wear a blindfold for a game. Eventually I found out he was concerned about head lice. Apparently this had been a problem at his school . . . YUK! What should I do – quit using blindfolds or just ignore the problem?

Grossed Out

**Dear Grossed Out,**

While blindfolds could spread head lice between kids, you don't have to quit using them. Just make sure you have enough for everyone so they don't have to share them. Then wash them in good hot, soapy water **every time** you use them.

MI

**Dear Master Interpreter,**

Back when I worked at Park X we used to gather acorns for the kids to pound during Junior Ranger programs. Now that I've transferred to Park Z it is considered a mortal sin to gather anything in the park for ANY purpose, even a legitimate interpretive purpose. What are the real rules on this? I'm

Going Nuts

**Dear Going Nuts,**

Don't waste your time focusing on the rules. Get out there and take your Resource Ecologist out for a cup of coffee! Get his or her perspective. Perhaps you may even come to an agreement to gather some acorns that fall in the maintenance shop yard or in the housing area, once your Resource Ecologist understands how critical they are to your program.

MI

**Dear Master Interpreter,**

Our Coop just bought us a nice video projection system. What do you think? Is it OK to show a professional video at my campfire program?

Video Kid

**Dear Kid,**

Good question. Here's another question. Why do we even need you? We could just have the concessionaire show videos on Saturday night. But, aside from the concerns about the quality of the interpretive experience, a far greater concern relates to intellectual property.

Most tapes you buy or rent are licensed for private home viewing. A group gathered in the park is considered a "public performance." Read the fine print or risk going to jail. Unless you have a license for public performance, don't show it. Intellectual property law is a real hot topic lately. I don't recommend taking any chances.

MI

**Dear Master Interpreter,**

You won't believe this one! A woman, appearing rather distraught, came into the visitor center at the Redwood National and State Parks to report that she had seen several Irish Setters lying along the edge of the highway and she feared they were dead or injured. Rangers explained to her that these were pieces of redwood bark that had fallen off logging trucks.

Amused



## Zero In On What Makes For Effective Interpretation

# M-O-T-E-R-ized Interpretation

by Wes Chapin

Here's a way of looking at your interpretive programs that will hopefully help you zero in on what makes for effective interpretation. It's called 'M-O-T-E-R-ized interpretation, and it goes like this:

### M is for "Measured"

Are you *measuring* how effective your interpretation is? I'm assuming that it matters to you that your interpretation has an impact on your audience. If you do, then don't you want to know how successful you were? Before you can know how close to the target you came, what do you need? Right! A target! In interpretation, that target comes in the form of OBJECTIVES that you determine before you conduct your activity. Once you know your objectives, you can do several things to measure them. An obvious way to measure how much your audience learned is to ask them. But there are other ways, too, such as observing how attentive your audience is, how many questions they ask, etc. The point is that **you've got to make a conscious effort to obtain feedback to tell how effective you were.**

That way you can tell if you need to modify your program to improve it.

### O is for "Organized"

Do you know the difference between a captive and a non-captive audience? Think back to one of the courses you took in school. As you sat in class listening to the teacher lecture, you were part of a **captive**

audience. You had to pay attention; your grade depended on it. You were willing to work (take notes, make sense of the information, etc.) even if the teacher wasn't particularly organized. Now think of the last time you were "channel surfing the tube." As you tuned into a program, how long did it take before you decided whether to continue watching? Probably only a few seconds. That's because you were a **non-captive** audience. You didn't have to watch the show. If it didn't grab your attention, if it was the least bit hard to figure out what was going on, you tuned out *quickly!*

Guess which type of audience you are dealing with at a campfire program . . . or a nature walk. You guessed it: non-captive. If your program is hard to follow, if it's just a mess of information, how long before they tune out? Right again. *Muy pronto!* You need to make your program so easy to follow,

the message so clear, that someone could pay attention in their sleep. How? One way is to keep the number of main ideas in your program to no more than three. (Up to five if you're really good!). Otherwise, you'll probably cause your audience to start tuning out because they just don't want to put the effort into keeping all the information sorted out. After all, they're on vacation!

### T is for "Thematic"

Another way to make your program easy to make sense of is to make sure it has a strong theme. In fact, from what I've read over the last couple of years about high quality interpretation, **building your program around a strong theme is the single most important thing you can do to communicate your message with maximum effectiveness!** An easy way to understand what a theme is, is to ask yourself this question: After my



audience has finished attending my activity, after they've heard my spiel, *what is the one thing I definitely want them to remember?* The answer to that question is your theme!

Don't get "theme" mixed up with "topic." For example, a topic for a

### R is for "Relevant"

Do you know what separates interpretation from other forms of communication? CONNECTION! If you don't establish a connection to your audience, you're not interpreting, you're just giving out information. Brace yourself, but I believe that most

the Chumash (how many teenagers were at your last campfire program?). But if you advertised a program that promised to reveal how a teenage Chumash girl attracted the most eligible teenage Chumash boys, you just might attract some curious teenagers. Why? Because you were offering information that was potentially personal to them. **Relevant information is both meaningful and personal. And that's the kind of information your audience is most likely to remember** because they not only understand it but they also care about it!

***Installing a "M-O-T-E-R" into your programs is as easy as 1-2-3-4-5! Just make sure that they're Measured, Organized, Thematic, Enjoyable and Relevant.***

program might be 'Birds,' but that's not the theme. Under the topic "Birds," your theme *might be* "Eagles and hawks help humans." See the difference? A theme is more specific than a topic. It's the punchline. Every part of your program should be designed to make sure your audience remembers your theme.

### E is for "Enjoyable"

Remember, your audience is on vacation. They just want to have fun! If your program is fun, you've just about guaranteed at least some degree of success. How do you make your program fun? Participation! Get your audience involved. Think of ways to get your ideas across that require your audience to do something. People remember 10% of what they hear; they remember 90% of what they do! If your program mostly involves your talking, you are, in effect, saying that you're willing to settle for being 90% ineffective! There are other ways to make your program enjoyable, but this is one of the best.

of what passes for interpretation in this department is really nothing more than information, primarily because it doesn't grab the audience where they live.

To do that, you need to ensure two things: that your information is meaningful and that it's personal. A meaningful fact is one that you can connect to something you already know. If I tell you a tree is an ash tree, that's not necessarily meaningful to you. But if I tell you that tree is the "baseball tree" and then proceed to describe how baseball bats are made from trees like this, I've connected with something you already know. I've made my information meaningful to you.

But that's only half the battle. I may connect my message to something you know, but you may not care about it. To build a solid bridge between "thee and me" I've got to make you care about what I'm telling you. In other words, I've got to help you personalize my information. Example: most teenagers aren't interested in a campfire program about

If I were a betting man, I'd wager that you probably haven't put a lot of effort into thinking of ways to make your program relevant to your audience. How do I know? Because, unless I miss my guess, you're a lot like me. And as a so-called interpreter, I've spent an awful lot of time making sure the facts in my program were straight and not much time thinking about the kinds of people in my audience and what kinds of things they care about and how to tap into their loves, their fears and their hates. But that's what I'm doing now.

Well, there you have it — "M-O-T-E-R-ized" interpretation. If your interpretation has been a little sluggish lately, drive into the nearest garage, pop the hood and check it out. Maybe it doesn't have a M-O-T-E-R! Don't panic. Installing a "M-O-T-E-R" into your programs is as easy as 1-2-3-4-5! Just make sure that they're Measured, Organized, Thematic, Enjoyable and Relevant. You'll be back on the road in no time, and you'll be amazed at the power and enjoyment as you M-O-T-E-R down the highway of **effective interpretation!**

Why sit around getting your uniform daubed with paint or glue?

# Making a Case for Crafts

By Mary Stokes

For a long time I thought that activities which fell into the Arts & Crafts category scored high in the "recreation" column, but low on the "parks" side of the ledger. After all, we have the real estate, the trees, the animals — so why sit around a picnic table getting your uniform daubed with paint or glue? But art activities are gaining new standing in the educational community, and they can pull together and expand on the themes of more traditional programming. There are some good reasons to add arts and crafts to your interpretive repertoire:

## **People become emotionally involved with their creative projects.**

When Park Aide Sarah Pence conducted paper-making activities for Junior Rangers at Turlock Lake SRA, no one ever forgot to come back and pick up their hand-made paper, and they wanted to be sure they were getting their own work. Engaging the emotions is a key to a memorable program, and researchers believe that an emotional response is the basis for any change in attitudes or behavior.

**Many people learn best with their hands, and all of us learn better when a concept comes to us in several different ways.** Help visitors to build a "geology cake" of your unit (mountain, valley, etc.) using layers, colored frostings, and candies to show the different kinds of rocks. It's 3-dimensional, fun to make, and the cross-sections taste good. A large

body of recent educational research supports the notion that people vary in the way that they learn best. "The idea," says Celia Genishi, chair of the Department of Curriculum Development at Columbia University's Teachers College, "is to give children many different entry points for learning."

## **With planning, accuracy need not be sacrificed in a craft project.**

Some years ago my first grader came home from school with a spider made from 2 cells of an egg carton. He explained to me that unlike insects, spiders have only 2 main body parts, the cephalothorax and the abdomen. The teacher was clear about the main ideas she wanted to get across about insects and spiders. A good theme statement for a program will help identify which scientific or historical facts must be preserved in your activity to make it meaningful in the big picture.

## **Your volunteers, seasonals, and employees in classifications not traditionally involved in interpretation already have creative skills that can help to deliver your program.**

Conducting a structured art or craft activity may appeal to staff who might be hesitant about giving a guided walk or slide presentation.

**In craft activities, interpreters can model the re-use of waste materials and the thoughtful use of natural materials.** Actions speak louder than words. We can re-use botched photocopies for a sketch walk; old peeled pieces of crayon make the best bark rubbings. The office

shredding machine provides the perfect raw material for paper-making. Leaves that are gathered for leaf rubbings can be returned to the place where they were collected with a discussion of the habitat they provide or how new soil is formed.

## **We can promote ways of enjoying parks that are non-consumptive, and the art work itself communicates the value of parks to others.**

Photography, sketching, and keeping a nature journal are ways for visitors to achieve a new perspective on your park. Murals produced by children during or after a field trip can be displayed at school, or leaf-print post cards sent to family or friends. These become park outreach programs in their own right.

How do you know if the activity you have selected will make the grade as *real* park interpretation? According to Sam Ham in his book *Environmental Interpretation*, if it is enjoyable, relevant, organized and thematic. (All revealed in the first 2 chapters!) His ideas correspond well with the California Department of Education's five criteria for content in environmental education materials: thematic, interdisciplinary, age appropriate, depth over breadth, and relevant to students. Consult current general plans or interpretive planning documents to select activities that help develop the big picture. And don't forget your D.I.S.!





Sunday Morning at Silverwood Lake SRA

# Coffee with the Ranger

by Kim Baker

"Good Morning! Coffee with the Ranger" was presented every Sunday morning at Silverwood Lake SRA from May through the end of September. Rangers and other park staff were on hand to answer questions and greet campers, give out maps and make suggestions of fun activities, hikes and little known jewels of the park for visitors to explore. Tables were laid out with coffee, hot chocolate and goodies. The program was held at the camp host site and flyers were placed around the campground to inform visitors and remind them to bring their own mug for coffee.

Although the program began in May this year, many refinements were made as we went along. At the end of June we began asking visitors to sign in. From the last weekend in June through the end of September, over 1,000 visitors participated in the program, with an average of 67 per day. Other refinements included the addition of short interpretive talks. The program originally began as a low-key way for park staff to interact with visitors, give out information, and promote the 'friendly ranger' image. Since most campers have contact with park staff only at check-in time, on enforcement contacts or when problems arise, *Coffee with the Ranger* provided an opportunity for a positive interaction with visitors.

Ranger Danita Linse was the first to begin giving short interpretive programs as a part of her program. Some of her themes were: What's the

Difference—Poison Oak vs. Squaw Bush, Redwood vs. Cedar, Gopher Snake vs. Rattlesnake and Crow vs. Raven, The History of Cedar Springs (the town "under" the lake), and Where Does the Water Come From? These programs were 15 minutes or less and were very well received.

Ranger Lisa Lay used temporarily captive rattlesnakes in her program. At Silverwood Lake rangers frequently have to relocate rattlesnakes in the summer to protect the campground snakes from overzealous campers. These snakes sometimes make a short detour to a campfire program or other interpretive talk prior to their release in less populated areas of the park. Ranger Lay found that the snakes at *Coffee With The Ranger* were a big hit and were a great segue into her theme of *Everything Has a Place*. She also developed a *Snake and Rattlesnake* photo album that was passed around.

Other programs were organized around general introductions to park staff and camp hosts, and an invitation to talk with us and ask questions. Impromptu interpretation was the key to these programs! This informal approach created an opportunity to develop good PR for the Department, and attracted many campers who had never been to an organized interpretive program such as a nature walk or campfire.

*Coffee with the Ranger* has been presented every Sunday morning over the last 10 years, but it wasn't until this year that the program was

developed further and attendance increased. The success of the program this year can be attributed to our excellent camp hosts. Bob and Jerry Bragole handled the coffee-making tasks for the first half of the summer, while Chuck and Peggy Hasslock took over for the second half. The real talk of the campground, however, was the delicious baked goods made by camp host Joan England each week. Joan tirelessly baked a mountain of goodies like crumb cake, doughnut holes, brownies, cookies and hot muffins. A donation jar was added to help defray the cost of supplies, and by the end of the summer, we actually came out \$9 ahead. Joan kept a detailed log of the items she baked each week, and how much was consumed by hungry campers. She also learned early on to cut the goodies into small portions, as our intent was not to provide breakfast, just to extend a little hospitality. The hard work of the camp hosts enabled the morning ranger to drop in at 8am and leave by 9am, thereby not jeopardizing patrol. Never once during the entire summer was a ranger called for an emergency during the program.

Although the approach was a little unorthodox, *Coffee with the Ranger* was one of our more successful interpretive programs this year. Visitors left stimulated (both in mind and stomach), with a greater understanding of State Park philosophy and a positive image of park staff. One visitor was heard to say "This is the friendliest park I've ever been to!" With the tremendous help of our camp hosts, we look forward to resuming the program again next spring.

## Interpretive Communication

# Now Where Did I Leave That Theme?

By Carolyn Fatooh

Pine Ridge Association

Last issue I presented the four essential qualities of interpretation. To review they are:

1. Interpretation is **enjoyable**.
2. Interpretation is **relevant**.  
(that is, meaningful & personal)
3. Interpretation is **organized**.
4. Interpretation is **thematic**.

In my first article I discussed the importance of a theme in interpretive communication. Now, moving briskly backward, we reach the third essential quality of interpretation from Dr. Sam Ham's training workshop on *Practical Interpretive Methods*: Interpretive communication is **organized**.

So now you've come up with a nifty theme for your walk, talk, display or brochure. What do you do with it?

Having a theme will help to naturally organize your presentation.

Keeping your theme in mind, come up with five or fewer main ideas that you'd like the audience to remember.

Why five or fewer? This number comes from studies of how much information a person can handle at one time. The most famous study was by George Miller in 1956. He demonstrated in his article, "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two," that humans can on the average make sense out of only seven plus or minus

two new ideas at one time. Some people can remember as many as nine new pieces of information, some as few as five. So, limiting the pieces of new information to the lower level gives us seven minus two, or five new ideas we can expect our audience to remember. Dr. Ham has found from his own experience that for visual stimuli (publications, exhibits, etc.) three main ideas or less seems to work better.

Here's an experiment to try: If you limit yourself to no more than one second, which group is easier to count-A or B?

A	B
****	*****

How about these groups?

A	B
*****	+++++****

Notice what a difference it made to have the information organized? Even though B in the second example has as much information as A, it's organized into two easy-to-see groups of less than five.

Limiting your presentation to five or fewer main ideas reduces the effort the audience needs to put into following your ideas, and makes it more likely that they will continue to pay attention.

One thing to keep in mind: the audience will remember categories better than what's in them. So don't expect them to recall all the fascinating minutiae you've included to illustrate

your five or fewer main points. It's still better to have the audience recall the main ideas you want to get across than come out of your presentation with no more recall than "Gee, there sure are a lot of pretty rocks/flowers/birds/amphibians/old buildings/what-have-you at Coe!"

Here's another exercise to try: Which is easier to read - A or B?

- A TWAFBIPHDIBMCI  
B TWA FBI PHD IBM CIA

If ideas are organized around things the audience can already relate to, it will be easier for them to follow, and, again, easier to hold their attention.

Another organizing tip many students have learned in public speaking class is, "Say what you're going to say, say it, say what you said." In other words—state your theme, give your presentation, and summarize, restating your theme. This does not have to be as stilted as "I am going to talk about . . ." and "I have just talked about . . ." With a little creativity, the beginning and summarizing theme statement will fit naturally into the presentation.

Now you have a theme, and the theme is organized into five or fewer main ideas. You have a couple of other hints for ways to make following your presentation easier and help hold the audience's attention. Now what else can you do to keep that audience interested? More on that next issue!

*They Came Singing***Book Review**

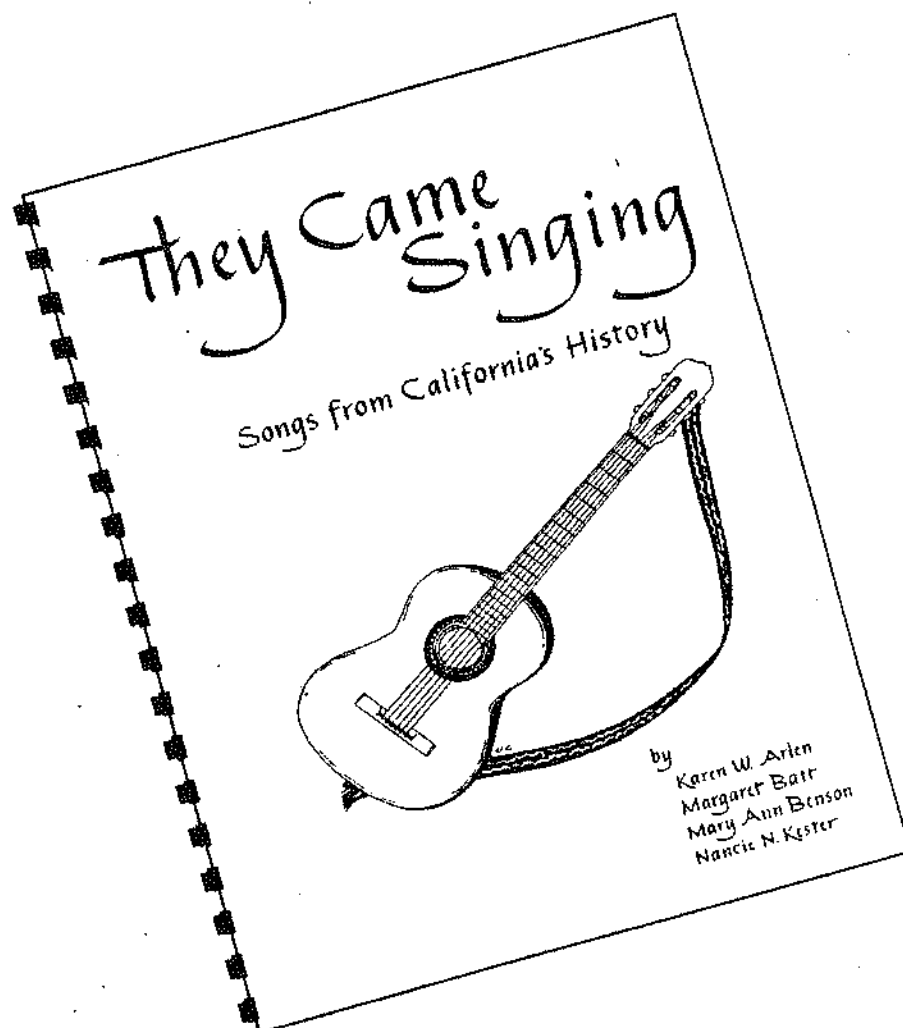
by John D. Mott

*They Came Singing* explores in word and song California's heritage from native peoples to the 49ers. The book is loaded with music that can enrich many interpretive programs in California state parks. Music is basic to human experience, transcends cultures, and affects our emotions. *They Came Singing* provides the keys to help tap the power of this effective interpretive medium. The book is especially appropriate now that the Sesquicentennial is approaching.

Four authors (Karen Arlen, Margaret Batt, Mary Ann Benson, and Nancie N. Kester) had two goals in compiling the 110-page book with accompanying 61-song compact disk: To bolster the nearly nonexistent music programs in schools and to make learning about California history fun. The book is divided into nine major "eras." Each era begins with an introduction and period map followed by sheet music and lyrics. Although the CD does not contain complete songs, it does contain enough of a sample portion of each song to enable novices to grasp the correct tune and finish the song from the song sheets.

The book is an excellent resource for any interpretive library and would probably make a fine-selling addition to most visitor center sales areas. It's especially good for interpreters without music experience (because of the CD), particularly if one cannot read music.

Research for the book began in



1983 and included long hours at UC's Bancroft Library. All the songs are based on original melodies and lyrics, except for two from the early explorer period from which not much music survived. One piece that survived and is included in the book is the evening prayer Sir Francis Drake is believed to have sung in 1579, when he landed in what is now Marin County.

Work is already underway for a second volume of songs selected from the Gold Rush to the present, which

the authors hope will not require the 12-year research and development period needed to bring this book to press.

You may see a copy of this book in the Interpretation Section reference library or better yet, make this unique book and CD part of your interpretive resources. *They Came Singing* can be ordered through Calicanto Associates, 6416 Valley View Road, Oakland, CA 94611 (510) 339-2081.



## ***Volunteers Are Free, But***

# **They Don't Work for Nothing**

by Paula Zitzler

Volunteers far outnumber paid staff in the heritage business. They're a valuable resource . . . but like any resource, they must be managed wisely. After several years of working with volunteers, and many more years of being a volunteer, I've observed much about the experience. When it's good, it's very good. When it's bad, it's awful bad. Here's how to make the volunteer experience good for everyone.

### **What's in it for me?**

Volunteers don't expect cash for their efforts. But, they deserve to be paid. A recognition dinner or award ceremony can express appreciation and be a lot of fun, too. Be prepared. Schedule your event and make a budget before you launch your program. While certificates, T-shirts, mugs, pins, etc. can be great thank-yous, remember that people don't volunteer to get a free mug. They want to experience something different. They want to learn something new. They want to help. The very best way to pay volunteers is to personally and sincerely thank them. Tell them often that they're making an important contribution and are appreciated.

### **We should all be committed.**

Being a volunteer is a job. There are schedules, time sheets and bosses. There's work to do. When people volunteer, they must understand that they are making a commitment. Everyone needs to know what is expected of them. The organization's volunteer coordinator should explain

its mission to prospective volunteers up front and make sure they understand how their efforts will help fulfill that mission. The coordinator should develop a volunteer job description and ensure that volunteers have the information and skills they need to do the job. That means clarifying how much time and when the volunteer will work, what will be done, how it will be done, and any special circumstances. Volunteers who do not support the mission or meet their commitments should be let go—fired.

### **You want me to do WHAT?**

Volunteers will 'bust' their backsides to do any reasonable and safe assignment. But don't expect them to do a job that the staff won't do. (Note that this "won't" is very different than "can't.") Many volunteers have skills that make them well-suited to a task, or they have time to put into a labor-intensive assignment. The volunteer must find a suitable job . . . and the coordinator must find the volunteer that suits the job.

### **Tromping along the paper trail.**

Both the volunteer and the coordinator must track hours. The organization needs to document how long each job takes. When planning a program, for example, it is important to know that a previous program needed 10 people and took 300 hours to complete. Volunteer hours can also have value when applying for grants and funding. Records of volunteer hours measure an organization's impact on the community and signify the community's perception of the

organization's usefulness. Many funding agencies consider volunteer hours as in-kind match when determining funding. Organizations can turn volunteer hours into cash . . . but only if they've been documented.

### **Failure is not an option.**

Despite the outcome of any project or task, volunteers never fail. If you're a volunteer, don't beat yourself up because the public didn't show up for a tour or program or because a fundraiser fell short. If you're the volunteer manager, don't panic. Learn from experience. Get over it. Work together. Troubleshoot. Plan better for the next go-round.

### **This is fun, and we're having it!**

Fun is essential in every volunteer job. Make it enjoyable. Be aware of the conditions that influence people's ability to work. Is it too hot, cold, dusty, wet, noisy, busy? Still, many volunteers enjoy the challenge and sense of accomplishment in completing a difficult task. Coordinators need to know their volunteers to decide who can handle what. If a task is daunting, try scheduling shorter shifts or breaking the task into smaller, more manageable pieces.

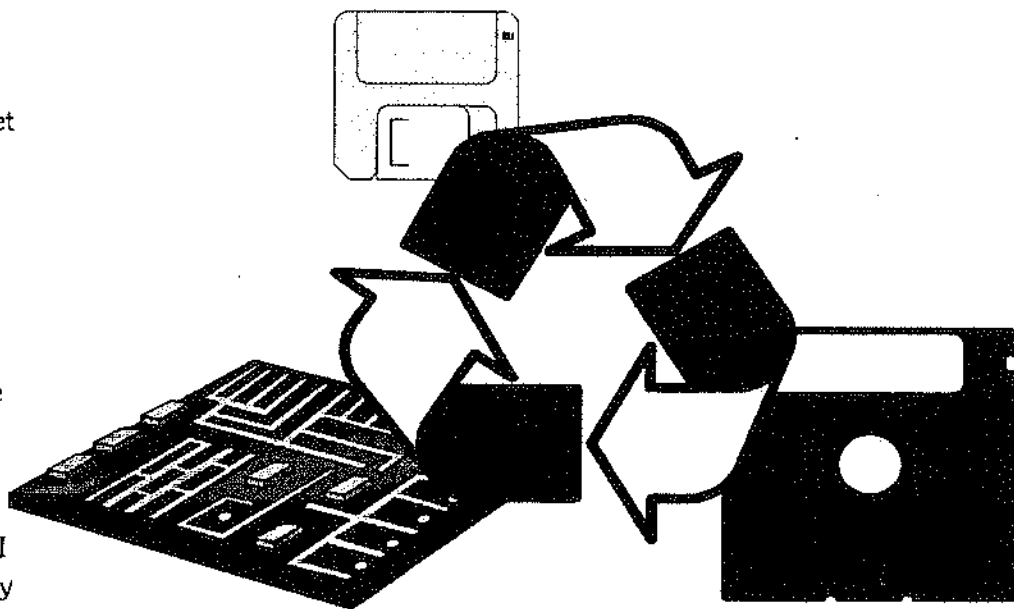
A little mutual respect and understanding can go long way toward making a successful volunteer program. Volunteers are not a captive work force. They select their "employers." An organization may not be perfect, but if the match is right, your volunteers will get the job done and do it well.

How to dispose of stuff responsibly

# Recycling Computers and Disks

By David Inouye  
University of Maryland

My department has a computer lab, and about every five years we get money from the Dean's office to upgrade the computers in it. By that time, the warranties on the old ones have expired and the campus facility for repairing computers has often declared them obsolete and will no longer repair them. In addition, there are caches around the building of hardware, like old green-screen monitors, and some "luggable" computers with 10 MB hard drives. I have my own collections of old floppy disks, promotional CDs that I'll never use, and the odd circuit board that I'm sure I'll never use again. There are places to recycle this computer hardware, and guessing that other ecologists also face the dilemma of how to dispose of such items responsibly, I've put together some suggestions.



## Where to recycle CDs or floppy disks:

The polycarbonate plastic (containing a layer of aluminum) that is the primary constituent of CDs can be recycled into other plastic products.

GreenDisk accepts CDs, floppy disks, and magnetic tapes. They also sell recycled floppy disks.

GreenDisk / Recycling Program  
8124 304th Ave. SE  
Preston, WA 98050  
Telephone: (800)305-DISK  
FAX: (206)222-7736  
[www.best.com/~dillon/recycle/](http://www.best.com/~dillon/recycle/)

Digital Audio Disk and Plastic Recycling are two companies that will recycle CDs and the plastic jewel cases they come in. Please remove any cardboard or paper from the cases.

Digital Audio Disk  
Phone: (812)462-8100  
Ship to:  
Jadcore,  
c/o DADC Disk Recycling Program  
300 N. Fruitridge Ave.  
Terre Haute, IN 47803

Plastic Recycling, Inc.  
Phone: (317)780-6100  
2015 S. Pennsylvania  
Indianapolis, IN 46225

## Places to donate old computers

The Parents, Educators, and Publishers Web site lists national and

local organizations (organized by state) that distribute or wish to receive used computers: [www.microweb.com/pepsite/Recycle/recycle\\_index.html](http://www.microweb.com/pepsite/Recycle/recycle_index.html).

The National Materials Exchange Network promotes the reuse, recycling, and recovery of 30 categories of materials, including computer components: [www.earthcycle.com/g/p/earthcycle](http://www.earthcycle.com/g/p/earthcycle).

Other sites include:  
East-West Education Development Foundation (617)261-6699  
Gifts in Kind International (703)836-2121  
National Cristina Foundation (800)274-7846  
Non-Profit Computing, Inc. (212)759-2368

***Don't Let this Happen to You!*****Embezzlement in the Redwoods****By Chuck Grennell**

Everyone hates to think of someone stealing from a non-profit but unfortunately it does happen. The Association noticed a regular pattern of low sales totals from the visitor center at Calaveras Big Trees State Park on days when a certain docent was working. For example, on Memorial Day weekend, the subject of this investigation worked on Saturday. On that day the total reported sales were about \$160.00. On the Tuesday after that weekend, reported sales were in the area of \$450.00. The subject did not work on that Tuesday.

This same subject had been the primary suspect in another loss in the fall. That case was not provable.

**Investigation**

There were several methods available to prove this case. The three main methods appeared to be: video taping, undercover surveillance, or controlled buy. Since we were under time constraints to accomplish this task, the controlled buy method was chosen. This seemed to be the easiest and quickest to set up.

I contacted two reliable buyers (one, the chief ranger's wife and the other a city police officer) to accomplish the task. Both were provided with marked money. Both were asked to pick items to buy that would come close to the amount of money that they were provided. In order to be able to pinpoint these purchases on the cash register detail tape, one buyer was instructed to make the very first

purchase recorded on that day, the other buyer was to make the last buy. Both buyers were given \$50.00 to make their purchases.

After each buy I collected their change and the items that they bought and held all of it for evidence. I interviewed both buyers and recorded their statements and observations. After the suspect had closed the visitor center for the day, I removed and held as evidence the day's proceeds, the detail tape from the cash register and the contents of the waste basket from next to the cash register. At a later date, I took records showing when the suspect worked in the visitor center and records of training on visitor center operations.

**Results**

As a result of this investigation, we were able to determine the method of theft. A visitor would put his or her selected items on the counter for the volunteer to ring into the register. The suspect would use pencil and paper (recovered from the waste basket) to add up the purchase total. The docent would then charge the visitor the full price (tax was included in marked prices on all items) and bag the sale for the buyer. As the visitor was leaving, the suspect would ring the sale into the cash register. In reality about half of the total sale showed up in the register. The other half of the sale went into the suspect's pocket. This subject probably rang up smaller sales correctly. I believe that he discounted larger sales only.

I then wrote the incident as a crime report, and submitted the case to the district attorney's office for prosecution. The superintendent and I went to the suspect's house and conducted an interview. After an initial denial, the subject admitted guilt in the matter. We advised the suspect that he was no longer a docent/volunteer. We took possession of his state property (I.D. card, vest, etc.) and left. This interview was recorded on tape.

In September 1996, the suspect entered a plea of no contest to two counts of P.C. 504, embezzlement. The 66 year old suspect was sentenced in November to:

1. 3 years probation.
2. 60 hours of community service (no, he will not serve it at Calaveras Big Trees State Park).
3. Complete counseling session that he had already begun.
4. Provide restitution to Calaveras Big Trees Association.

**How it Happened**

We have determined some of the reasons that he was able to accomplish these thefts.

A. The cash register did not show any display on the customer's side of the machine.

B. The machine did not produce a customer receipt.

C. The suspect always insisted on being the person behind the counter making sales.

D. The subject was frequently seen making change from his own pocket.

E. A comment he made to the business manager when closing out the register was "I always balance."



*What happens when you have a*

## Non-Cooperating Association

So, just what happens when a cooperating association decides to quit "cooperating?" After 25 years under contract with State Parks, the Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association (ABDNHA) gave notice to terminate their contract in October.

ABDNHA plans to continue operation as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and to continue to publish books and materials about the area. They remain dedicated to educational, scientific, historical and interpretive purposes. The details about what all this means still need to be worked out.

Borrego Desert Natural History Association hopes to gain more independence, but gives up a substantial revenue source from book sales in the Visitor Center.

The resources code, section 513, outlines what the department provides to co-ops. "The department would provide the services of department personnel, (and) space for the materials at State Park System unit visitor information facilities." Other non-profits do not get this benefit.

Currently ABDNHA has substantial

***"The Association has determined to continue now as a non-profit organization which is independent of governmental controls."***

### Why did they leave?

Of course, there is no simple answer to the question why. There are many reasons, but one big issue was the perception that the new DPR/Co-op contract gave DPR undue power over what they perceive as their private business.

According to ABDNHA Chairperson Marian Nelson, "The Association previously has enjoyed a level of freedom in its publishing and other activities and has determined to continue now as a non-profit organization which is independent of governmental controls."

### What does it mean?

By leaving the park, the Anza-

Borrego Desert Natural History Association hopes to gain more independence, but gives up a substantial revenue source from book sales in the Visitor Center. Some of that was donated for specific park projects. No decision has been made yet on the disposition of those assets. At times like this some things you might not have suspected become important. Just who owns that table in the library? It may have been in a state facility for 15 years, but who really owns it? Intellectual property issues also may crop up.

The moral of the story is that both cooperating associations and park liaisons need to always be cautious and professional as they conduct business. No matter how well things are going now, be sure to follow all the right procedures and fill out all the right forms to prevent headaches in the future.

## A Statewide Perspective



Throughout the state at this time, 56 associations have current contracts and another five have submitted contracts and are awaiting approval. The Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association joins two other associations that were formerly part of the Cooperating Association Program but now want to continue to support DPR without a contract or other formal linkage.

- Pendleton Coast Natural History Association
- Santa Monica Mountains Parklands Association
- Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History Association

Another 11 co-ops have not yet submitted their new contract; several small or inactive ones plan to dissolve over the next few months.

Stay tuned, we will surely be hearing more as time goes on!

**Customer Service:**

# The Key to Conservation

by Cregg Hardwick

I am not a naturalist but I am married to one. My training is in management, but because I often join my wife when she travels on business, I enjoy unique opportunities to observe various presentational styles, activities and programs from a perspective that lies somewhere between that of interpreter and visitor.

I recently had the chance to visit a park in Arkansas at which my wife was assisting in a program for boy scouts. As she had a busy schedule during the day, I availed myself of the opportunity to take a solo morning hike through the hills and beaver dams near the park and returned deeply entrenched in the role of observer. I spent the rest of the day visiting the various stations and observing interpretive programs by people of disparate backgrounds but similar passions.

After dinner, we circled the picnic tables for the traditional bonfire and story telling. The park's chief interpreter, who had just finished an exhausting day as policeman, coordinator and teacher, rose and called the gathering to order. After introductory remarks, announcements and jokes, he was prodded into telling "The Story of the Purple Gorilla."

You are probably familiar with this story as were your grandparents and theirs before them. Some of the boys might not have heard it told, but we adults certainly had. Yet this particular interpreter was not content merely to

tell the story. He performed it: pacing about, modulating his voice, inflecting; gesticulating wildly, and weaving doors, cellars, airplanes and apes out of the very smoke and darkness around us.

Exhausted at last, the man yielded his stage to the riotous laughter of the scouts, who were then to exchange their own stories in competition.

park, it may well be because one tired man wove apparitions out of thin air when he really would rather have been safely in bed.

Management consultant Tom Peters once pointed out a difference in attitude between contract and full time employees which, I believe, makes my point well. The contract worker, he said, cannot afford to merely meet the

***Naturalists have a responsibility that goes beyond greeting visitors and clearing trails. Through interpretation, creative marketing, and a business-minded outlook, interpreters hold the key to imbuing future generations with a love of nature.***

Since I had no other official duties this weekend, I was drafted as one of the judges, and watched as the first competitor drew near the fire, clearly enlightened and perhaps a bit intimidated by the performance he had just seen. He told another venerable story, possibly the only one he knew. But he told it with all the soul and creation of a young mind just awakened to new possibilities.

He sold it, and in the end he left the park with top prize (a book of stories for future nights of revelry), and I think with a little more self esteem and a truer appreciation for the whole scouting experience. When, in twenty years time, he is telling those stories to his own troop in the same

stated needs of the employer. More than doing the job, he must ensure that his efforts are noted so that he is invited back day after day. He must market himself to those who write the checks.

This is very important. It is easy for a naturalist or curator to fall prey to the illusion that his lot in life is to preserve the wilderness, study God's creatures, protect artifacts and in general pursue loftier aspirations than merely entertaining the tourists. But the truth is that wherever you are, whatever you have lined out for this week's programs—however important the studies and work that your visitors never see or appreciate—you are, first and foremost, paid to meet the needs



of other human beings. How well you meet these needs not only determines how long you may expect to be paid, but how well the underlying resources will be preserved as well.

Though Edward Abby might not have liked to think about it, he could not have lived in the wilderness without the tourists. And as destructive and mindless as development can be, human beings are the dominant force on this planet for better or worse. As Jim Fowler said while speaking at my wife's park, "wild animals will only survive if they are worth money." And if people aren't hiking the wilderness they'll be building on top of it.

No one would like to retire to the wilds for a life of academic solitude and study more than I. But the reality is that naturalists have a responsibility that goes beyond greeting visitors and clearing trails. Through interpretation, creative marketing, and a business-minded outlook, interpreters hold the key to imbuing future generations with a love of nature and the dedication to save it. As humanity moves further from its organic roots and more children grow up in cyberspace, getting them into our parks and museums is the only way to teach the value of things and places we work so hard to preserve.

The key to preserving the resources we love lies in learning to manage and market them as a business. If we can study natural resource management, then we can study business management. And if marketing and service excellence can keep voters coming back to campfires, it can keep the funds flowing as well. It is a balancing act to be sure, for with the money comes garbage, noise and stress, but the alternative is unacceptable. Neither governments nor corporate sponsors exist to preserve our wild places. And when public interest is gone, so will the places themselves fade away as even the best tales do, when spoken into the darkness.



# Beware of Student Stipends

By Pat Cole, Executive Director,  
Yellowstone Association

Cooperating associations are being asked to pay "stipends" for interns, volunteers, etc. All may wish to be aware that our research has led us to establish some guidelines for payments to volunteers and others in order to comply with IRS regulations.

**A person is either a volunteer or an employee; there is no middle ground.** Employees are paid a wage, taxes are withheld, benefits must be paid, etc. Volunteers, on the other hand, are not paid, but the IRS allows reimbursement of expense for volunteers if the expenses are as a result of their volunteer duties (such as lodging, travel to their volunteer post or as a result of their duties, or for food if food costs are in excess of what someone would spend at home due to the remote or resort nature of the location, etc.)

Ideally, volunteers should provide receipts for actual expenses; however, "de minimus" (very token) reimbursements for volunteer expenses are generally allowed by the IRS without the volunteer needing to provide receipts to the organization providing reimbursement. To the extent that reimbursement exceeds actual expenses, such amounts are taxable to the volunteer, so volunteers may wish to keep receipts in case of audit by the IRS. The Yellowstone Association has established the de minimus amount we will reimburse volunteers without requiring receipts at \$7 per day. There is no "magic number" which will qualify as "de minimus;" the \$7 a day

was something we decided upon that we were comfortable with and our legal counsel was comfortable with. The higher you go, of course, the greater the risk that this will be seen as something other than a de minimus reimbursement.

All may also want to be aware that the IRS recently settled an \$81.5 million dollar claim against the University of Wisconsin relating to payments of stipends to graduate assistants. **The IRS position was that stipends were a taxable form of payment for individuals who were performing work in return;** the University claimed that stipends represented scholarships. The \$81.5 million represented unpaid withholding and FICA (Social Security) taxes on amounts paid as stipends in the past. The case was settled with no payment being required, but an agreement was reached that graduate students in the future would be treated as having received taxable income equal to the amount of stipends paid (which would mean that they would be subject to federal and state income taxes and the university would be responsible for withholding and remitting appropriate amounts), but that no Social Security tax would be assessed on the stipends.

So, cooperating associations paying stipends should be aware that if the stipend is beyond a de minimus reimbursement for valid volunteer expenses and no receipts are required to support the reimbursement, or if the reimbursement is being used for expenditures other than those which a non-profit is allowed to reimburse volunteers, and/or the relationship

appears to be one of employer/employee rather than volunteer, then these persons receiving stipends may be deemed to be employees, and the cooperating association may also be confronted with problems regarding minimum wage laws, benefits, withholding taxes, etc.

In short, the stipend route, while it appears very simple, has some fairly complex considerations which go along with it. Cooperating associations wish to be as helpful as possible in alleviating the shortage of funds to hire NPS staff; however **cooperating associations have no special dispensation to operate outside established laws regarding taxability of payments to individuals.** The Yellowstone Association will make lump sum donations to sponsoring universities to support their internship programs; it is then up to the university to handle necessary payments to the student—who may be working on an internship in Yellowstone (and solve any related tax implications which may result).

The Yellowstone Association also has hired individuals to accomplish special projects on behalf of the NPS. In some instances, these people are actually supervised by the NPS person with the expertise needed to direct the activities. However, these people are Yellowstone Association employees and must receive the same benefits; we must withhold and pay appropriate taxes, unemployment benefits, etc., as with normal employees. Also, if they are fired illegally, or sexually harassed or anything else which can get an employer in trouble, the Yellowstone Association is on the hook. As I said before, people are either volunteer employees, but there is no cost-saving alternative in-between.

# CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS. 150 EXCHANGE.

## GRANTS ! GRANTS ! GRANTS !

THE CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES is looking to fund SESQUICENTENNIAL PROJECTS that 1) are grounded in the humanities; 2) directly involve humanities scholars; 3) use the humanities to foster multicultural understanding and/or strengthen community life; and 4) are free to the public.

During 1997-1999, the Council is interested in proposals which touch any or all of THREE BROAD AREAS:

- The reasons people came and continue to come to California;
- The ways Californians sought and continue to pursue community; or
- The ways Californians envisioned and continue to envision the future of their communities and their state.

Consider applying to the council for SUPPORT for LECTURES, TEMPORARY or TRAVELLING EXHIBITS, SYMPOSIA and CONFERENCES, READING - and - DISCUSSION GROUPS, and CHAUTAUQUA PRESENTATIONS. Consult a Council program officer today to discuss their Quick (*up to \$2,500*) and Major (*up to \$10,000, or \$15,000 in matching funds*) Grants! Contact their San Diego Office: (619) 232-4020; Los Angeles Office: (213) 623-5993; or San Francisco Office: (415) 391-1474.

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## A MEXICAN PERSPECTIVE.

THE HISTORY OF ALTA CALIFORNIA: A MEMOIR OF MEXICAN CALIFORNIA, written by Antonio Maria Osio in 1851 and published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 1996, conveys an immediacy of detail about the U.S.-Mexican War and its aftermath. Osio's account is often at odds with Hubert Howe Bancroft's better known histories written in the late 1870s.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE ➡

# **NATIVE AMERICAN WORKSHOP?**

THE INTERPRETATION SECTION, PARK SERVICES DIVISION is exploring the idea of developing a workshop focused on Native American issues in 1998. Emphasizing direct experience over classroom-style instruction, it would examine NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE FROM THE POINT-OF-VIEW OF THE PRESENT. The workshop would be structured in concert with members of the Native American community and would focus on current interpretation, along with techniques and strategies for enhancing programs. A sample of possible topics could include:

*California Native American Cultures--Then and Now*  
*Storytelling*

*Language Preservation*

*Preserving Sacred Sites*

*Contemporary Native American Issues*

*The Native American Heritage Commission*

*California State Parks' Repatriation Program*

*Interpreting Culturally Sensitive Subjects and Artifacts*

*Gathering Materials in State Parks for Cultural Purposes*

*Resources for Interpreting Native American History and Cultures*

*Native Americans and the Internet*

If you are interested in becoming part of a group to work on the idea, please CALL ROB WOOD, at (916) 653-7976. Department employees of Native American ancestry are encouraged to participate.

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✍ **Diane Voll has been working on the Sesquicentennial WEB site for the Department. Access will be through California State Parks Information: <http://www.ceres.ca.gov/parks/>**

✍ Sherrin Grout of Columbia State Historic Park is looking for other parks interested in tin cans of the 1850s era for living history programs and exhibits. She has acquired several replica dies for cans from Parks-Canada and would like to "manufacture" enough to bring the cost of their reproduction down to a manageable price per unit. If your park has a need for any, please give Sherrin a call.

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**CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS:  
THE HEART AND SOUL OF  
CALIFORNIA'S SESQUICENTENNIAL.**



# California's Tapestry

A Section of *The Catalyst*

Office of Community Involvement

Issue #5 - Winter '97

## Cultural Diversity Terms and Ideas Revisited

By Jack Shu

At the last "Interpretation and Cultural Diversity" course held at Asilomar, March 1995, Gary E. Machlis presented a number of concepts which may be worth reviewing. He explained what culture is and how people catalogue experiences to "interpret" and understand what we say or show. Machlis then challenged us to make a choice about truth. He used the terms *logocentric* and *multicentric*. Logocentric means having one truth and believing that there is only one perspective or correct way in which things can be explained or recalled. Multicentric thinking acknowledges that there are many perspectives or different ways to explain things. Machlis said that we have to make a choice between logocentric or multicentric approaches to interpretation and education.

Multiple truths? Initially the idea appears to be an oxymoron. How can there be more than one truth? I believe it may help to understand this concept if we separate our individual beliefs from our professional or organizational truths. Machlis was

referring to our professional perspectives or our organizational beliefs. As an interpreter or educator you can make a choice. As an organization, California State Parks has already made a choice. Our publications, displays and programs often show many perspectives and beliefs — as Machlis would say, they have a multicentric view.

For many years we have been trying to describe the past through the eyes of a local Indian, or an immigrant from the East coast or across the Pacific. Living History programs are multicentric in that different characters are portrayed. Eurocentric history is only one of the many perspectives which we interpret in our parks. Ranger Alan Beilharz's video, "The Miner's Hat" dramatically tells the truth of several individuals from California's past.

Multicentric thinking is not limited to social science education. As we educate park visitors to our natural history, multiple perspectives are also needed. Try these questions for multiple truths: Is a mushroom a plant? What is an endangered spe-

cies? What are the boundaries of the ecosystem we protect in Parks? What role does fire have in our communities? Is it important for us to move toward having more sustainable systems? Since many of us have science backgrounds, we seek one answer for each of these questions. However, in education the challenge is to provide questions and develop problem solving and critical thinking skills so that students can find their own answers. The goal is not to simply transfer information or ideas. At the NAAEE conference in Burlingame this last November, some educators were saying that as much as possible Environmental Education should not teach values. Teaching skills which develop values should be the goal.

The advantage of multicentric presentations is that they prompt receivers to think and find their own truths. This should make the program provocative, interesting and of greater educational value.

Speaking of truth, the last "Tapestry" article was a book review of *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by James W. Loewen. At the NAAEE conference there was a session which was very well attended titled "Lies My Environmental Education Teacher Told Me." The discussion and exercises at this session were very enlightening.

Submit articles and comments to: Jack K. Shu, Park Superintendent, OCI- Southern California, c/o Southern Service Center, 8885 Rio San Diego Drive, San Diego 92108, Ph# (619)220-5330



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